

(WASHINGTON)- Congressman Chet Edwards (TX17) today attended the White House signing ceremony for H.R. 1016, the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act of 2009, legislation that will provide the Department of Veterans Affairs advance appropriations to craft its health care budget a full year in advance.

"For the first time ever, Congress has passed and the president has signed into law legislation that provides an advance appropriation for VA Medical Care," said Edwards. "This new law keeps America's promise to our veterans who have kept their promise to defend and protect our great nation, and sends a clear message that we appreciate and respect their service and sacrifice."

"This was a top priority of America's veterans' service organizations because it will allow the VA to invest taxpayers' dollars more effectively and efficiently while delivering health care benefits to veterans in a more timely manner."

As Chairman of the House Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Subcommittee, Edwards authored \$48.2 billion in advance appropriations for fiscal year 2011 for three medical accounts: medical services, medical support and compliance, and medical facilities. The bill passed the House for the first time on July 10th.

"Advanced Appropriations for VA health care has been the highest legislative priority for DAV and many other veterans service organizations in recent years." Raymond E. Dempsey, National Commander, Disabled American Veterans.

"By providing advanced appropriations for 2011, VA will now have sufficient, timely, and predictable funding. This will allow the VA to better coordinate for the use of valuable resources, to include hiring of key medical staff and other demands that are unique to the health care setting." Raymond C. Kelley, National Legislative Director, AMVETS

"Approval of advanced appropriations represents a truly historic accomplishment that will benefit all veterans." Carl Blake, National Legislative Director, Paralyzed Veterans of America

"Enacting advanced appropriations is one of the VFW's highest priorities." Robert E. Wallace,
Executive Director, Veterans of Foreign Wars

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